March 19, 2010

"I ran for Congress in large part because I believe we need to find a way to bring down the cost of health care. I also ran for Congress with a simple promise: I would do my best to represent my district and to give western Pennsylvania a voice in Washington, not the other way around.

"I regret that this year-long process of debating health care reform has resulted in a final product that I cannot support. The cost of inaction on health care is great, but it would be an even bigger mistake to pass a bill that could compound the problem of skyrocketing health care costs.

"Simply moving money around within the existing system, rather than enacting real delivery system reform, might change who pays the bill, but it does not improve the quality of care or reduce costs for families, small businesses, or the federal government. It creates a system of winners and losers, rather than reforming the system in a way that lets everyone win. It is estimated that after passage of this bill, federal health care expenditures would likely increase above what they would under current law.

"It has become clear that the vast majority of my constituents want me to oppose this bill. Particularly hard hit would be western Pennsylvania's Medicare beneficiaries, which many experts believe would experience dramatic premium increases with enactment of this bill.

"I am acutely aware that my decision to vote against the health care bill will disappoint some of my constituents and alienate supporters of the bill. The politically easy vote would have been to vote with my party. But I was not sent to Congress to take the easy way out or to vote the way they want me to vote in Washington. I was elected to represent my district and give western Pennsylvania a voice in Congress. I strongly believe that a vote in opposition to the health care bill is consistent with the views of the district I represent, and is the correct vote based on the impact of the bill on my constituents and the overall health care system."